Celebrating 100 years

Milestones mark Inco's history

1883: In the westward expansion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, blacksmith Tom Flanagan detects copper sulphide in a right-of-way cut through rock on the rim of the Sudbury Basin. It later becomes the Murray Mine.

1902: The International Nickel Co. is formed on April 1. The new company combines the refining capabilities of New Jersey's Orford Copper Co. with the rich Sudbury ore deposits of the Canadian Copper Co. The merger secures its needed financial backing from US Steel, which sees huge potential for nickel steel in building the new century's ships, bridges and automobiles.

1919: The International Nickel Co. begins using the trademark name, Inco.

1929: Mond merges with Inco. Their combined resources make it possible to develop the rich Frood-Stobie ore body in Canada, while Mond's British location provides a launching pad to better penetrate British and European markets.

1930: International Nickel completes an ambitious construction program involving mines, smelters, refineries and power plants. The new smelter in Copper Cliff begins operations, marking the end of heap roasting.

1946: Inco sponsors experiments to test an airborne magnetometer to detect ore and becomes the first mining company to use the device to explore for ore.

1953: Inco introduces nickel powder for use in nickel cadmium (NiCad) batteries. By 1964, over 50 companies are reportedly using NiCad batteries in over 20 different types of electric devices.

1956: On February 27, a major nickel ore discovery is confirmed at Thompson, Man.

1958: The Port Colborne refinery develops a new process for recovering nickel by the direct electrolysis of nickel matte.

1961: The mining and refining operations at Thompson, Man. are formally dedicated in March.

1965: The Japanese economy booms. Inco, together with Shimura Kako Co. and Mitsui & Co. forms the Tokyo Nickel Co.

1968: The Indonesian government invites companies to compete for the right to explore and develop ore deposits. Inco is chosen and forms a new subsidiary, PT International Nickel Indonesia (PT Inco).

1969: Inco sinks a 7,138-foot shaft, the deepest continuous shaft in the western hemisphere, at Creighton mine.

1971: Inco's new Clarabelle Mill, capable of treating 35,000 tons of ore a day, becomes operational in November.

1972: Inco spends $26 million (US) on a state-of-the-art smelter chimney at Copper Cliff.

1973: The $140-million Copper Cliff Nickel Refinery officially opens.

1977: In Sorowako, PT Inco builds Indonesia's first major nickel plant.

1985: Inco scientists develop a new process for separating precious metals.

1990s: More than $600 million is invested during the decade to reduce sulphur emissions at Sudbury operations.

1994: Prospectors looking for gold discover the Voisey's Bay nickel-copper-cobalt deposit in Labrador, Nfld.

1996: Inco acquires Diamond Fields Resources. This gives the Company a 75 per cent interest in Voisey's Bay.

A world leader in robotic-mining technology, Inco joins with partners Dyno Nobel, Sandvik Tamrock and Natural Resources Canada (CANMET Laboratories) to form the Mining Automation Program.

1999: Inco builds a pilot plant in Goro, New Caledonia. The $50-million program provides Goro with a new port and power plant and creates 680 jobs.

Sales in specialty products double during the last decade. The company establishes the Inco Special Products business unit to extend its capabilities.

2000: Inco exploration uncovers a major deposit at Kelly Lake near Sudbury.

2001: With the success of the pilot plant in Goro, Inco breaks ground on a $1.4-billion fully-integrated commercial nickel-cobalt mining and production plant.

Inco's oldest operating mine, Creighton celebrates its 100th anniversary. Discovered in 1856, it shipped its first ore in 1901. The life of the mine is extended with the Creighton Deep project.

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Inco announces the formation of a new Canadian and UK Operations, consolidating the previous Ontario, Manitoba and UK divisions.

Inco positions itself for longterm viability

By IAN ROSS
Northern Ontario Business

The continued lifespan of Inco's Creighton Mine mirrors the longevity of the nickel giant's existence in Sudbury.

After a multimillion-dollar expansion of the 100-year-old mine that dropped activity down to the 7,660-foot level, the first ore from the extension was delivered right on schedule last July. It is the first phase in a $190-million project that will extend the mine's life to 2013 and beyond. Tapping into long-hidden resources close to their existing Sudbury operations with the latest in leading edge technological advances is part of Inco's plan to pursue low-risk and profitable ventures.

Among the world's leading producers of nickel, supplying about 24 per cent of the world's demand, Inco is closely watching its dollars and finding ways to trim costs wherever possible in supplies, services, energy, labour and taxation. This is part of a business strategy to keep the company in the bottom quartile of low-cost producers.

Because of the routinely fluctuating nature of mineral prices, it is a practice they have followed for the past decade, says Scott McDonald, Inco's Ontario general manager.

With major capital projects on the books for Voisey's Bay, Nfld., at their Goro development in New Caledonia and other operations at their Indonesian subsidiary, there will be limits on their access to money for the next few years, so maintaining and sustaining what they already have in Northern Ontario is key.

"That means we'll have to be very diligent and very prudent in our spending here," says McDonald. "We'll have to sustain our plays and the integrity of our assets here."

It also means delving into development projects, not so much to expand capacity in Sudbury, as to maintain current levels, such as going deeper at Garson Mine and bringing new deposits at the Totten and Kelly Lake properties into production.

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